

**Lewis County Planning Commission  
Public Hearing  
Lewis County Courthouse  
351 NW North St.  
Chehalis, WA 98532**

**October 25, 2011  
Meeting Notes**

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Jim Lowery, Russ Prior, Bob Guenther, Mike Mahoney, Richard Tausch, Bill Russell, Arny Davis

**County Commissioners Present:** Lee Grose

**Staff Present:** Lynn Deitrick, Jerry Basler, Glenn Carter, Pat Anderson

**Others Present:** Please see sign in sheet

**Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from October 11, 2011
- LCC Chapters 17.145.140; 16.02.040; 17.300
- Staff Report on South County Plan
- South County Plan
- Staff Report on Urban Reserve Areas
- Map of Urban Reserve Areas

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Russell called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

**II. Old Business**

A. Approval of meeting notes from October 11, 2011

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes. Commissioner Prior asked to make a change to the notes on page 3, the third paragraph under item B. This is speaking to the context of the subarea plan which is full of elements. He thinks the word "element" is confusing in this context and suggested it should read "one result of that meeting..."

Chairman Russell stated while he did not have a problem with changing that word the purpose of the minutes is to record exactly what was said at the meeting. If Commissioner Prior thinks that was said in error then that would be a correction that should be made.

Commissioner Mahoney moved to approve the meeting notes; Commissioner Lowery seconded. The motion passed.

B. Public Hearing on Code Amendments to Chapters 17.145.140, Fences; 16.02.040, Utility Lots; 17.300, Compliance

Chairman Russell opened the public hearing and stated there is a sign in sheet and asked people who wished to testify to indicate that on the sign in sheet. The Chair recognized Mr. Deitrick.

Mr. Deitrick stated the staff report speaks to one new chapter and two sub-sections that will be added. The new chapter is the compliance chapter. To be considered are new processes and penalties for violations to certain Lewis County code provisions. One new sub-section, LCC 16.02.040, Utility Lots, allows for the creation of utility lots for public purposes, and new sub-section LCC 17.145.140, Fences, considers changes to regulations concerning the placement and height of fences exceeding six feet.

Chairman Russell asked if there were questions from the Planning Commission. There were none.

The Chair asked if anyone from the public wished to testify. There was no one.

Chairman Russell closed the oral portion of the public hearing, stating written testimony would be accepted until Friday, October 28 at 5:00 p.m. Written testimony can be emailed, mailed or delivered to Community Development at 2025 NE Kresky Ave, Chehalis.

#### C. Workshop on Subarea Plan and Urban Reserve Areas

Mr. Basler stated at the last workshop he summarized the progress on the Plan since February. The new information in the packet is the Subarea Plan and the staff report. An issue that became apparent in the Plan as it was worked through is the Capital Facilities Element which needs more work. Along with that is the parallel path between the cities of Toledo, Vader and Winlock and their issues with sewer and water, which will tie in eventually with who serves the ultimate economic urban growth areas.

Mr. Basler and Mr. McCormick met with Department of Commerce, who is familiar with this Plan, and they suggested, since the Plan is still evolving, to pull the policies that are on pages 1.4 through 1.6 and put those in a resolution to the BOCC. The resolution would state that the county is moving forward and intends to adopt the Plan. That, combined with establishing the urban reserve overlay zones, will allow staff to work on the Plan next year, add the Capital Facilities Element, and work on the issues with water and sewer.

Mr. Basler asked that the Planning Commission consider pulling the policies out and forwarding those to the BOCC in December. Those policies will amend the Comprehensive Plan by resolution and the urban reserve overlay will be an ordinance which will establish the future boundaries of the economic urban growth areas. There will be overlay zones for 20-acre minimums and will act as a placeholder while the Plan is developed to actually establish the economic urban growth areas.

Commissioner Lowery clarified that the policies would be adopted by resolution but hold off on the urban reserve areas. Mr. Basler stated the policies would be adopted, and the urban reserve areas will be a separate action to be adopted by ordinance. Mr. Basler stated those would be two separate actions.

Commissioner Guenther spoke to the economic development and demand opportunities, page 4.5. He read the portion regarding manufacturing. He reiterated what the EDC director said not long ago, and that was that [Lewis County] land is not for sale cheap and our labor is not for sale cheap. Commissioner Guenther stated there was an article in the Chronicle a couple of days ago that said a good majority of the schools in this area has over 40% school lunch programs for their kids. We do not want to get into that sort of situation.

Commissioner Lowery stated the urban reserve areas on I-5 have been withdrawn because there is no access to utilities. He asked if Growth Management prohibits the establishment of an urban reserve or

urban growth area where it is not in close proximity to an urban area that provides those services; does it prohibit someone putting in their own water system or sewage treatment plant.

Mr. Basler stated Mr. McCormick, staff and Commerce felt that services were not there – they are too far away and there is not enough development there to make an argument for urban reserve designation. Commissioner Lowery asked if Growth Management prohibits someone from establishing their own utility service. Does it have to come from an incorporated city?

Mr. Basler stated he would need to research that. Commissioner Lowery stated he was involved with rural economic development for years and his group was pushing for self-contained sewage treatment and looking for alternative treatment methods. He asked if Growth Management prohibits doing that type of thing in an unincorporated area.

Mr. Carter stated all that GMA requires is that the utility service is there prior to designation as an urban growth area, or that the arrangement is made for such service at the time of designation for the urban growth area. It would not have to be part of a municipal service. There is another factor and that is the adjacency issue. We are talking about urban reserve; we are not talking about creating an urban growth area at this time. There is the adjacency requirement and some courts have interpreted it as requiring that these areas are adjacent to an urban growth area (UGA), and many times it is the municipal provider that provides the utility service.

Commissioner Lowery asked what does that do to communities like Packwood or Randle that do not have a sewer system. They don't even have a UGA because they are not incorporated.

Mr. Carter stated that is correct but they cannot be frozen out. The county's position has been in circumstances such as Packwood that GMA would permit the creation of a sewer utility. If it were to become a UGA then that would have to be provided for, but it could become a UGA in certain circumstances.

Commissioner Mahoney stated the report states there will be no immediate change to any zoning. It says the urban reserve areas will have restricted development in anticipation of an urban development later on. How can the county stop the construction of 20 homes in that area where ten years from now it will be turned into a commercial area?

Mr. Basler stated the two areas are either RDD-5 or RDD-20 and they have certain restrictions currently for commercial use. Commissioner Mahoney stated RDD-5 could end up with improvements that would preclude any large major development. The existing zoning does not stop the construction of new residences as long as it meets the zoning requirements and there is nothing proposed to preclude any new residential development.

Mr. Basler stated no, it is establishing the 20 acre minimums for subdividing.

Commissioner Mahoney stated his point is that 15 or 20 years from now the county is ready to go in with some kind of industrial park it is possible that there will be homes that will need to be purchased and destroyed to make room for it. Mr. Basler stated that would be a private party issue. Commissioner Mahoney asked if the reserve is being enforced.

Mr. Basler stated the reserve is a tricky term. Everything that is allowed now will be allowed. If someone wants to build a house and the zoning allows it, they can build. It does not prohibit what you can do in the zone right now.

Commissioner Mahoney stated he is in favor of looking 15 years down the road to make sure that when the time comes that the type of industry that he would like to see in this area has a place to go. Urban sprawl is not just fast food places up and down the highway; it is also home sites that make that property unattractive for any other development. If we are looking at those two areas with the potential for a large complex it will be hard to develop that without an adequate land base that is not covered with residences. While we are not seeing a push for homes out there, we are not preserving those areas for industrial or commercial development.

Mr. Basler stated that is what we are trying to do with the urban reserve zones: keep the acreages where they are and a decent size.

Commissioner Prior asked if the urban reserve area is to preclude making smaller parcels. Mr. Basler stated it is to preserve large lots.

There was considerable discussion. Chairman Russell tried to clarify. He stated if he owned 150 acres in that area and he wanted to subdivide it into 20-acre tracts and put a house on each one, could he do that once the resolution is passed? Mr. Basler stated yes, he could divide into 20-acre lots.

Mr. Carter stated he did not think it was the intention to wait 15 years. The reason the county went to the urban reserve is because of the necessity of developing the utilities element. The utilities element will take some time but he hopes it doesn't take 15 years. The hope is that the urban reserve area designation is a placeholder for a relatively short period of time.

Commissioner Mahoney asked Mr. Basler if there is any more information about the regional water treatment plant or if the three south county cities are each going their own direction.

Mr. Basler stated the last he heard is that Toledo has a grant to do a preliminary study to do its own treatment plant. He has not attended the meetings. Cathy Read said there are still negotiations going on but Mr. Basler is not aware of the progress.

Commissioner Guenther encouraged regional treatment plants. He believed it was a mistake when Chehalis and Centralia each built their own. It could have saved millions of dollars if they had built a regional plant.

Chairman Russell stated if the policies in the South County Plan are extracted and recommended to the Board to be adopted by resolution, he asked the Commissioners to go to the last page, Housing. He read the policy which states that "housing to support commercial and industrial development...will be developed in the UGAs of South County..." He stated that is an excellent policy, however, at the beginning every other policy says things like "economic development UGAs should be designated..." The criteria for UGAs should be parcel size...They all say "should be", "could be", "may be". If this is going to be a policy that the county is going to be adopt, why not make the policies set in stone. This has been a complaint of Chairman Russell for as long as he has been on the Planning Commission.

Mr. Basler stated generally policies show what the intent of the plan is once the plan is adopted.

Chairman Russell stated he will not recommend that these policies go forward for that reason. He was speaking for himself, not for the other Commissioners.

### **III. Calendar**

The next meeting will be November 8, 2011, which will be a public hearing on the South County Subarea Plan and the Urban Reserve Areas.

Commissioner Mahoney stated he understood that the hearing would be at the Courthouse. Chairman Russell stated he spoke with Mr. McCormick. The majority of the land owners have already been told that the hearing would be at the courthouse, and more importantly is the ability to record it at the courthouse. Since the issue is dealing with GMA the record is paramount and it is difficult to get a good recording at a different location.

### **IV. Good of the Order**

Chairman Russell stated the County Commissioners passed a resolution that no longer restricts the term limits of Planning Commissioners.

Commissioner Lowery stated earlier in the meeting Commissioner Guenther brought up a good point about jobs. There was discussion about distribution centers and how much space they take up for the number of jobs they create. It was said they are high wage jobs and he asked what is considered a high wage job in Lewis County.

Commissioner Guenther stated he serves on the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council and the average household income in Lewis County is \$37,500 a year. Lewis County is at less than 70% of the state's average wage. Our land and our labor should not be cheap and yet 40% of the kids are on school lunch programs. We need to think ahead about not selling ourselves out too cheap. Commissioner Guenther considers a medium wage job is around \$42,000 per year, single income.

Commissioner Grose addressed the comment about warehouse wages. He does not know what warehouses pay in Lewis County. The Ace Hardware warehouse people [in Yakima] do quite well and those that work the hardest get paid the most. They are paid an hourly wage, which is around \$15 an hour, but they are also paid on the basis of their fill times and accuracy of their fills, which is an incentive program. Many of them are making upwards of \$65,000 a year.

### **V. Adjourn**

The business before the Planning Commission concluded. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.